



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott  
Eastern District of California**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **FAKE DEA AGENT NABBED**

FRESNO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent in Charge Javier F. Peña announced today the indictment of BRETT MICHAEL PETERSEN, 20, of Selma, Calif., for impersonating a DEA Special Agent, extortion under color of authority, and making threatening communications.

This case is the product of an investigation conducted by the DEA, Selma Police Department, and Kingsburg Police Department.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen Escobar, who is prosecuting this case, PETERSEN, an unemployed methamphetamine addict, falsely represented to several victims that he was a DEA agent. While acting as a DEA agent, the defendant carried what appeared to the victims to be a firearm. The defendant told the victims that he had a government-issued vehicle, discussed his caseload, and showed them methamphetamine that he allegedly had seized in his cases. The defendant also offered to take victims, including a 16-year-old girl and a 13-year-old boy, on a ride-along and gave them a purportedly official DEA ride-along form to complete. The victims who completed the ride-along form provided their social security numbers, addresses, dates of birth, and other identifying information. The defendant used this information to apply for and receive unauthorized credit and debit cards, e-mail accounts, a cell phone, access to a bank account, and other things of value.

At a bail hearing, Senior United States District Judge Oliver Wanger found that

PETERSEN is “a one man crime wave” who is “a menace to the community” and ordered him detained without bail before trial.

DEA Resident Agent in Charge John Donnelly stated, “Imitation is not always the highest form of flattery, and in this case, it is a very serious offense. Impersonation of a law enforcement officer undercuts the public trust we need to effectively do our jobs. Contrary to how this individual portrayed us, DEA Special Agents cannot use controlled substances or maintain personal possession of them, and do not offer ride-alongs to the public.”

United States Attorney Scott stated, “When individuals masquerade as law enforcement agents to commit crimes, it not only facilitates the commission of crimes such as identity theft and fraud but increases the potential for danger and violence that dedicated officers encounter daily.”

PETERSEN’s next court appearance is scheduled for Friday, May 16 at 1:30 p.m. when he will be arraigned on the indictment. The crimes with which PETERSEN is charged carry a maximum statutory penalty of three years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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